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The American RECORD GUIDE

FOR THE AMERICAN MUSIC LOVER



FEBRUARY, 1950 VOL. XVI, No. 6

edited by PETER HUGH REED

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"Some Enchanted Evening"
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Both from South Pacific
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Fatale"

Verdi: Macbeth—Sleep Walking
Scene

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Puccini: Madama Butterfly—"
"Un Bel Di, Vedremo"

Puccini: La Boheme—"Mi
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Columbia LP Records

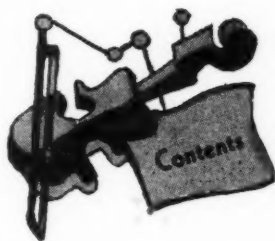
"Columbia," "Masterworks," and the Trade Marks Reg. U. S. Pat. Off. Marcas Registradas

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Supremacy of the LP

Editorial Notes

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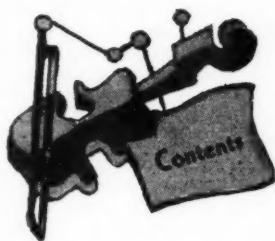
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ments, and represent an economy in expense that is decidedly worth considering."

Thus, in 1930 RCA Victor comprehensively advanced the benefits of the LP disc. It would seem to us that the wisdom of their statement and the perspicacity of their judgment in those days would have prevailed, despite the fact that their early LP disc was not a success. Changing personnels through the years, undoubtedly both in the musical as well as the engineering management, forgot or overlooked the importance of their early pioneering. Twenty long years had to go by before RCA Victor reverted to the 33 system—the system which they invented, and later discarded to the rival who had struggled so long to overtake the mighty prestige of the Victor Red Seal record.

LP Experiments

At various times during the past twenty years, rumor has been rampant that RCA Victor was experimenting with LP recording. However, inquiries to the company have always brought denials. Yet, such records were made just prior to the war for broadcast usage, which certainly tends to promote the belief that the company had not completely forgotten or overlooked its pioneering work in this field.

Many technicians in the broadcasting world prior to the war were of the mind that LP production would materialize quickly but the size of the disc would be altered to 16" instead of the standard 12". Perhaps this was considered at one time. New managements never seem willing to discuss the activities of their predecessors. Sometimes, one has the impression that a new personnel is either unaware of, or prevented from discussing, former company policies. Who can say?

The musical world will always be grateful to those responsible for the Microgroove record developed by Columbia Records, Inc. It provided the serious music lover with the opportunity to hear musical works played as the composers intended them to be played, uninterrupted by the breaks that were disturbing to architecture and continuity. Had Columbia chosen to repeat the passage quoted above from RCA Victor's 1930 catalogue when its first Microgroove discs were issued, it would have been understandable (if not condonable as good business eth-

ics) for the statement concisely covered the advantages of the LP recording.

It is apparent in the light of later-day events that even if Victor was still continuing to experiment with an LP record as late as 1943 the 45 rpm method of reproduction (which came into the picture sometime around 1940) had forestalled the further development of the 33 rpm system. Presuming that an LP was carefully considered in a larger size—16", for example—the desirability of the 7" disc with its distortion-free reproduction was perhaps the most logical record to advance. In the first place, to play the 16" disc, music listeners would have had to have 16" turntables and 16" tone arms. Probably not one machine in a thousand in the country was equipped to handle such a record. In big business a luxury item is hardly a profitable one, especially in a market that caters to a majority. To convert everyman's phonograph to play the 45 disc was far easier than to convert it to play a 16" record. In the past twenty years the cabinets housing reproducing equipment have become smaller and smaller. The old Orthophonic, the original first phonograph for reproducing electric recordings, had sufficient space to allow performance of 16" discs and many of us, by using a two-way pickup or soundbox, were able to play the larger discs of Pathé and other companies that were then available. Once the player with its changer mechanism was developed for the 45 disc, it was logical that this new system be introduced to the world.

Retarding Events

Had the war not intervened in the development of the 45 record and this system had been put before the public at an earlier time, we believe it would have met with immediate success. Unfortunately its release was badly timed, for the Columbia Microgroove disc had been issued and the advantages of the latter had already created a revolutionary change in the record world. There is no question that the LP record has met with buyer approval in this country. Even the diehards, who refuse to acknowledge its advantages because it necessitated alterations in their phonographic equipment, have gradually come around to collecting LPs. Daily, several old readers who permitted their subscriptions to expire, be-

(Continued on page 181)

SELECTING A PLAYER ASSEMBLY FOR LP RECORDS

By ROBERT S. LANIER

AS THE LP REVOLUTION gains new momentum, more and more phonograph owners with 78-rpm equipment continue to convert and seek the benefits of long-playing records. There are many ways the 78-owner can avail himself of these advantages. A player for the LPs can be acquired and wired into the outfit as auxiliary equipment. This means, of course, two separate turntables, with obvious difficulties in space assignment, and some circuit complications.

Such a separate player may be the best procedure, if the pickup and motor in use for 78s represent a heavy investment and provide a quality of reproduction from these records that the owner is loath to disturb. In the great majority of cases, though, the economics and technology of the matter indicate that one might as well buy new multispeed equipment to replace completely the old. Two or three speed equipment costs more, but not much more, than single 33-rpm equipment. It seems probable that most record owners will want to pay that extra amount to obtain all their record playing on one turntable. In addition, it will generally be true that the results with 78s on the new multispeed equipment will be at least equal to, and in many cases better than, the old equipment. This will almost certainly be true if the owner has not yet acquired one of the improved post-war pickups.

This article will deal with the problem of choosing among satisfactory two- or three-speed players at different price levels. It is understood that the new equipment will be used with an existing amplifier and speaker system.

It should be said first that the low-priced "packaged" LP players now available are best avoided by the serious music listener. These inexpensive players were an essential part of the introduction of the LP discs, for they gave record companies a large enough potential market to make

the new records economically feasible. The record owner with a desire for fine reproduced quality will not want the inexpensive packaged players for the long pull. The technical problems involved in playing LPs are more critical than those for 78s. Marginal playback equipment simply falls short of measuring up.

It should be stated now that the equipment recommended below has been available a relatively short time. So far, it seems good, according to fairly widespread experience of experts and amateurs alike. Keeping this in mind, we can first choose items for a multispeed player at about the lowest price level that will give reasonably satisfactory results: \$20 to \$35 for turntable and pickup. This will include the General Industries "heavy duty" two- or three-speed rim-driven motor, and the General Electric pickup. The G. E. pickup with its reversible stylus allows for playing either standard or micro-groove records by twisting the proper stylus into place. As pointed out in previous articles, this is a magnetic pickup — as are all those mentioned below — and if the outfit has been used with a crystal pickup, a pre-amplifier-equalizer will be necessary, to add in front of the amplifier. This can be done inexpensively by buying one of the one-tube units now available for the purpose.

At a moderate increase in cost, substantially improved pickup performance can be obtained with the new Audak Polyphase, or two-in-one pickup, and the arm designed for it. This unit provides two needles, one at top and one at bottom of the housing. The whole pickup cartridge is on a swivel joint, so that it can be turned over to bring either needle into contact with the record. Based on the fairly short experience with this pickup to date, it seems like one of the best solutions to the problem of the two kinds of needles, one for standard and one for

microgroove, that is fundamental in any multispeed playback equipment today. This pickup may cost less in the long run and prevent troubles as its needles are interchangeable by the owner.

Those who wish a changer for their 78s must increase the investment up to what we are considering a medium price level for the purpose of this article to approximately \$50 for turntable and pickup. A good solution is the Webster two- or three-speed changer, which can be equipped with the Audak two-in-one pickup, for overall coverage. (It is assumed that some users will want to play all three speeds, 78, 45 and 33, and others only two. This choice can be freely made in buying multispeed equipment, at a slight increase in cost for three speeds as against two.) The crystal pickup, with metal tipped needles on shift lever, can be obtained with the Webster changer, but it will not give a satisfactory performance to the record enthusiast with experience of, or a simple desire for, fine quality of reproduction. The much improved performance of the better magnetic pickups, with jewel points, is definitely desirable in playing LPs.

One convenient aspect of the Webster equipment is that in most cases the multispeed changer will fit in the space occupied by the 78-rpm unit of the same make. Those who have had the Webster changer and are adjusted to it can therefore get approximately the same kind of motor performance on LPs by a simple substitution.

You Pay For Convenience

It should be understood that in buying a changer, one is paying more money for the convenience of the changer mechanism, and not necessarily for improved quality. Because of the difficulty of arm design in changer mechanism, and because of the critical importance of the arm in playing LP records, the simple motor-and-arm combination will give better performance than the changer, if the high quality arm is used with the hand-turned out-fit. This should be kept in mind in evaluating the returns to be expected from any given combination of equipment. Moreover, it should be observed a changer mechanism may, as time goes on, be used less and less. Then too, the listener in time may find his playings of 78 discs so infrequent that manual handling can be tolerated.

At our third price level, \$75 to \$125 for the turntable-pickup combination, the music listener will get best all-around results. Such a purchaser should go to one of the more expensive multispeed motors, such as the Rek-o-Kut. Better motor quality pays off handsomely with LP records. If the amplifier and speaker system give strong reproduction in the bass, rumble becomes a most serious problem with LPs played with a poorly designed motor. Insecurity of speed, that too familiar "wow" which is particularly painful in playing piano recordings, is another fault that must be endured with most of the inexpensive motors, but not with a higher priced one.

The Pickering Pickup

With the Rek-o-Kut turntable, or one of similar quality, another pickup choice at this third level is the Pickering, which has a stronger and somewhat wider frequency response and an unexcelled clarity in its class. (With this motor, the Audak pickup in the arm designed for it will do a good job if one does not want to increase costs.) A new arm, designed for the Pickering pickup, offers many conveniences in operation as well as what promises to be excellent characteristics as to tracking, pressure, alignment, record wear, etc. With the arm, the user must buy two cartridges — one for standard and one for microgroove records. These can be plugged into the arm in a very simple manner as they are needed.

The Pickering Company also makes a very fine preamplifier for use with its pickups, and for those who can invest more money for flexibility and the smoothest kind of reproduction, there is an adjustable record compensator. This latter allows the user to match both the treble and bass characteristics of the various makes of records, in a manner similar to the bass compensator equipment described in an earlier article.

With the Pickering pickup, or other pickup of similar quality in a highly refined arm, and a motor and turntable such as the Rek-o-Kut, the home phonograph owner will get about the best all-speed results he can expect, short of going to strictly professional equipment costing several hundred dollars. This refers to the pickup and turntable part of the outfit only, of course; the final ear quality will depend on an amplifier and speaker system, as well as on the pickup and turn-

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table. If one owns a high quality amplifier and a fine speaker system, results should be topnotch.

The foregoing has all referred to the situation in which the record enthusiast is completely replacing his 78-rpm set-up with new all-speed equipment. Various other moves are possible. For instance, if the record enthusiast does not want to replace his present pickup for 78s, and has room in his cabinet, he can save some of the cost by using two tone arms: (1) his old arm and (2) a new arm with microgroove cartridges, also a two- or three-speed motor. Again, the old cartridge may be adapted so that it plugs into the new arm interchangeably with the new microgroove cartridge.

Whatever equipment is bought to bring LPs into use, the problem of connecting the pickups properly to the amplifier should be given the necessary attention. No matter how fine the pickup, it will be disappointing to the user unless it is correctly "loaded" and hooked in properly. If a preamplifier designed for the particular pickup itself is used, this problem should take care of itself. Lacking this simple solution, the phonograph owner should probably turn to expert help in installing the new playback equipment. The manufacturer's recommendations 'as to proper loading and other conditions of use should be obtained and followed in assembly. The finest pickup can perform badly if improperly attached.

Eliminating Hum

To reiterate, the most important problem that arises with the installation of a magnetic pickup is hum, induced in the pickup by the field of the motor. The less expensive motors are the ones most likely to produce that truly annoying hum level. If there is a loud hum which varies somewhat in level as the pickup arm is moved by hand back and forth over the turntable, motor hum is indicated. One solution which is available if there is plenty of room in the cabinet is to rotate the motor mounting to the point of least hum. That is, the whole motor should be unfastened from the motor boards, and rotated on its axis while listening for minimum hum. The volume and bass controls should be turned up high. When the best position is found, the motor should be fastened down at that point. The same result can be obtained by moving the pickup around the motor, of course, but

in most cases it is simpler to move the motor.

Another solution to the hum problem is the use of shielding, either on the pickup cartridge, or flat on the turntable. The rather expensive material known as mumetal can be used in fairly thin sheets to provide effective shielding. A last problem, that has been referred to in an earlier article, is the leveling of the turntable, and pickup arm. A strictly level area is vitally important for distortionless playback of LP records. You can always place cardboard of the desired thickness under the legs of the cabinet at required points.

The foregoing covers available equipment for playing LPs which has proved itself in use. Many new types of pickups, motors, etc. are coming on the market with the success of the LP recording. Those that offer real value will be discussed in later articles.



The Singers' Toll of 1949

BY LEO RIEMANS

†
Part II

Gertrude Runge This soprano, born 1880, died on June 7th, 1948, a fact of which we were not cognizant until recently. Here is a singer whose records are greatly overvalued. I notice with amusement that one has been re-issued by Collectors Records! Runge had a pleasant voice which recorded very well in the early days when few sopranos were phonogenic. But she never amounted to much as an operatic artist, and her career was restricted at first to the provincial town of Weimar. Later, she sang five years at Mannheim. After this she sang on the Berlin radio where I heard her in the late 1920s singing such parts as

the Countess Ceprano in *Rigoletto*. Undoubtedly her records sold well in the old days, for certainly she made tons of them. She began while still in her 'teens on Berliner, and made nearly a hundred titles for G. & T. and H.M.V., as well as Edison cylinders (including Amberola), records for Homocord, Vox, Da Capo and all sorts of queer small concerns. They have little historical or artistic value, and to re-record them — in my estimation — is a waste of time and money. There were several recording sopranos in America with far lovelier voices, such as Olive Kline, Lucy Isabelle Marsh, and Grace Kerns. Not every name that appeared on G. & T. was a true historical celebrity.

Giuseppe Reschiglian. This talented singer (1875-1949) died in Holland, where he had taught singing since 1938. He made only one Fonotipia record, from Mascagni's *Lodoletta*, and some Venetian songs on electric H.M.V. discs in 1930. He was the brother of Vincenzo Reschiglian, a baritone who sang for many years at the Metropolitan, and who survives him in Italy. Both singers were born in Venice and trained in their native Italy. Giuseppe sang in America, chiefly at Philadelphia in the 1920s.

Marie Louise Edvina. This Canadian-born soprano passed away on the 13th of November, 1948, at Nice. Curiously, I found no notices or obituaries in American music magazines, and learned about her death only a short time ago. Born Marie Louise Martin in Vancouver, she married the Hon. Cecil Edwards at London in 1901 and Italianized his name. She was a star pupil of Jean De Reszké, who practically built her voice. In 1908, she made her debut at Covent Garden as Marguerite in Gounod's "Faust," and thereafter sang regularly there until the outbreak of the war. She made her debut with the Boston Opera Company in 1912 and in 1915 she appeared at the Metropolitan, singing "Tosca" with Caruso and Scotti. She remained one season at the Metropolitan and then went with the Chicago Opera Company. Her most important roles were Fiora in "L'Amore dei Tre Re" (which she sang at the opera's initial performance at Paris in 1914), Tosca, Louise, Marguerite, Thais, Manon, and Antonia in "Tales of Hoffman." She recorded on red label H.M.V. around 1918, but her records were never repressed by

Victor. They deserve more attention from American collectors, especially her lovely "Depuis le jour." Critics contended that Edvina's impersonations of Louise and Thais were patterned after Mary Garden's and it may be that she was coached in these roles by Miss Garden. I have a theory that Edvina's worthwhile recording of Debussy's "Noël des enfants qui n'ont plus de maison" was accompanied by the composer, though the label does not so state. However, the label of Julia Culp's "Nuit de Tolies" claims Debussy on the H.M.V. version, though Victor lists the accompanist as Conrad V. Bos. Both Culp and Bos affirmed their association in this song, and Mme. Culp particularly requested me to state she never even met Debussy in his lifetime. The Culp and Edvina recordings were both issued by H.M.V. in the same year. As the latter's was made in Paris, when Debussy was there, it is possible that somebody mixed up the composer's name on the two labels, placing it on the wrong record. H.M.V. was often very careless in those days, as I have a Melba recording of "Depuis le jour" (with her name engraved in the matrix showing through the label) accredited on the label to Bori.

Zélie de Lussan. This highly gifted soprano, who ranked in her day as one of the great interpreters of Carmen, died on December 16 in London a few days before her 86th birthday. One of the last survivors of the Golden Age, and a doyenne of all living singers, her title passes on to Gemma Bellincioni (born 1864), still living at Naples, and then to Emma Eames (born 1867), now living in New York. Lussan made her debut in 1885, when she was twenty-two, with the Boston Ideal Opera Company. Her first performance in the title role of "The Daughter of the Regiment" in New York brought forth the following tribute to her artistry.

"A slim, graceful, sprightly little lady, with crisp, curly black hair, large, dark eyes and plenty of what the French call 'chic' and the English 'go,' Mlle. Lussan is a born actress, with quaint, pretty, cunning ways that win the heart of the audience. As a singer, her voice is fresh, pure and true and she uses it artistically, but with the zeal of youth. . . She has the beauty of youth, its dash and its fervor."

Carmen and Zerlina were de Lussan's most popular roles in the early days. She sang the former for the first time at the

Metropolitan on November 26, 1894, with the De Reszkes, Jean as Don José and Edouard as Escamillo, and no lesser an artist than Melba, as Micaela. Lussan was one of the earliest red label Victor artists, and her "La Paloma" is probably in the majority of collectors' possessions. Her single "Carmen" recording of the "Habenera" and her "Mignon—Connais-tu le pays" are also prized recordings. In London, she also made records for Beka, another "Habenera" and the "Mignon—Styrienne" besides a couple of songs.

John O'Sullivan. This tenor was another casualty of 1948. He died in Paris. He was one of the leading dramatic tenors of the 1920s, who attained his greatest successes in Paris and in Italy. He sang with the Chicago Opera Company after World War I and some may recall his performance of Othello. He recorded extensively for acoustic Columbia, Parlophone and electric Pathé, but his records are not too well known or easily found in America. No biographical information on this singer is available.

Walter Widdop. Finally, we have the noted British tenor who died on September 6th at the age of 56. His death was as impressive as any singer could have asked for. Having sung **Lohengrin's Farewell** in a Promenade Concert in Royal Albert Hall, he collapsed on his return to the artist's room and died a few hours later of a heart attack. I have a feeling that Widdop will come in for a goodly share of posthumous fame, and deservedly so. His Wagnerian recordings were a great deal better than any of the recent ones I have heard (I shall not name the offenders). I would especially draw attention to his Handelian recordings, which surely are among the best ever made. His **Sound An Alarm** from **Judas Maccabeus** never fails to impress anyone for whom it is played. Compared with this sturdy, martial rendering, Evans Williams is forgotten, and Edward Lloyd seems a decrepit old man. Widdop's conception of **Maccabeus** was every inch an imposing Old Testament hero and warrior. I like his **Thou Shalt Break Them from The Messiah** even better. It is the only version I have ever heard that does justice to the fury and obsession which Handel put into his music. Then, there are his arias from **Acis and Galathea**, models of Handelian style. What a pity that this fine English tenor did not make any records from 1932

until last year, when he made a surprising come-back as Aegisth in the Beecham set of **Electra**.



Recent Importations

THIS DEPARTMENT'S most cheerful news of the month is the reduction in price of English H.M.V. records in this country. Unfortunately the DA and DB series, pressed in France and Italy, are not effected, but at least a major segment of the H.M.V. catalog is now within the reach of a large number of record collectors who formerly could only pore over the listings with envy. It is to be hoped that other English companies will follow suit, and that the competitive urge furnished by these foreign rivals will spur our domestic companies to better recording techniques and engineering practices.

Including the federal tax, 12" discs of the DB series that formerly cost \$2.25 are now \$1.85, and the 10" DA series are now \$1.31. The "plum label" series, formerly \$2.10, now sells for \$1.57. If you are unfamiliar with the products of European engineering, try Solomon's recording of the Liszt "Hungarian Fantasia" (HMV C3761/2) for superb realization of piano tone carefully balanced with brilliant orchestral quality.

The world-wide eminence of the veteran conductor **Ernest Ansermet** as a sympathetic and accurate interpreter of a tremendous variety of scores, both modern and classical, together with the many excellent recordings he has made with his own band, **L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande**, have served to direct our attention to musical activities in Switzerland.

The December 1946 and January 1947 issues of the **American Record Guide** featured a very interesting article in two parts by **G. S. Cuming** and **F. F. Clough** on **The Swiss Record Scene**. They discussed the birth of the recording industry

in Switzerland, which received its initial impetus from the wartime blockade that prevented the usual consignments of imported records from entering Switzerland. Many of the discs mentioned by **Cuming** and **Clough** have now made their way to this country, along with a number of newer ones.

The **Winterthur Municipal Orchestra** is one of the leading Swiss instrumental groups, among which can be included the **Suisse Romande** (Geneva), the **Berne** and the **Basel Musical Societies**, and the **Zurich Tonhalle**. **Herman Scherchen**, now permanent conductor at Winterthur, was formerly in charge of the **Riga** and **Koenigsberg** orchestras. He is also author of a standard handbook on conducting used all over the world. This group has made an interesting series of discs which, while not notable for later-day high fidelity, still boast reasonably quiet surfaces and a clarity consistent with good pre-war engineering standards.

Best of the listings now available is a **Gluck** "Flute Concerto in G", realized from manuscript by **Dr. Scherchen**. Apparently there is some doubt as to its authenticity, but whether or not the piece was written by **Gluck**, it is still a charming work. The solo part is agreeably performed by **Willi Urfer**, while the accompaniment is trifle rough but always musical (Swiss HMV DB6083/4). Another worthwhile set is a selection of eight numbers (out of fourteen) from the ballet "Les Petite Riens" (K. 299b) of **Mozart** (Swiss HMV DB6080/1). Those of us who remembers the old **Leo Blech** single disc (Victor 11445, withdrawn) have always wished for a more generous helping of this delightful score.

Equally well performed but less entertaining are "Symphony No. 1 in B flat" by **Gaspard Fritz**, 18th century Swiss violinist (Swiss HMB DB6085/6) and "Symphony No. 1 in D" of **C. P. E. Bach** (Swiss HMV DB6095/6). These are unrewarding in comparison to the latter's "B flat Symphony" (Deutsche Grammophon set DGS-7).

The chamber orchestra of the **Basel Musical Society**, conducted by the talented **Paul Sacher**, has been responsible for the world premieres of many important modern works, among which are included **Bartok's** "Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta" (1937), **Martini's** "Concerto

for Violin, String Orchestra and Percussion" (1942), **Stravinsky's** "Concerto in D" for string orchestra (1947), **Honegger's** "Jeanne d'Arc au Bucher" (1938), "Danse des Morts" (1940), "Symphony for Strings" (1942), and "Fourth Symphony" (1947).

The **Basel** group has recorded **Conrad Beck's** "Serenade for Flute, Clarinet and String Orchestra" (Swiss HMV HEX 121/3) with **Joseph Bopp** (flute) and **Emil Fanghaenel** (clarinet) as soloists. **Beck** is a middle-aged conservative Swiss composer who has specialized in compositions of chamber proportions (and why not?) with a first-rate chamber orchestra close at hand. **Frank Martin**, better known than other Swiss composers (except **Honegger**) in this country, is represented by a "Ballade" for solo flute, string orchestra and piano (Swiss HMV HEX 120). **Bopp** is again the soloist. These are well-made, conservative scores, based mainly on the middle-of-the-road French post-impressionist school of writing.

In a similar vein but slightly more assertive is the suite "L'Aubade" of the 48-year old Italian-Swiss composer **Andre-Francois Marescotti**, played by **Ansermet's Orchestre de la Suisse Romande** (Swiss HMV HEX 116/8). Included in the same set is **Marescotti's** B major Piano Suite, performed by **Lottie Morel**, a dextrous, stylish pianist.

There is not too much of importance in the vocal list. Aside from a recording of **Beethoven's** "Gellert Lieder, Op. 48" by the Swiss baritone **Paul Sandoz**, which I have not been able to hear, there is a set of **Mussorgsky's** "Songs and Dances of Death" sung in German by **Marko Rothmueller** (Swiss HMV DB10062/3), a reliable but somewhat hard-voiced baritone who is not unfamiliar to patrons of the New York City Center Opera Company. **Elsa Scherz-Meister**, soprano, sings effectively **Honegger's** "Saluste du Bartas" (Swiss HMV DB10086) and his "Trois Poemes de Claudel" (DB10085) discs that may be offered in evidence of that composer's abilities in the field of vocal composition.

I wish to add to my nomination of last year's best imported records, cited in part in January, some others.

New vocal personalities that stood out include the French baritone **Souza**, the

sopranos **Irmgaard Seefried** and **Victoria de los Angeles**, and the basses **Raphael Arie** and **Boris Christoff** (see above). **Fauré's** "L'Horizon Chimerique" (Decca K1693) as sung by **Souza** is reminiscent of Panzera in his best form. **Seefried's** "Deh, vieni non tardar" (Eng. Col. LX 1145) and **de los Angeles** "Air des Bijoux" (HMV DB6983) are representative.

In the chamber music category my vote goes to the "B flat Divertimento" of Mozart (K270), beautifully performed by a group of Danish wind players (HMV DA6260/1). Also from Denmark, some fine "a capella" singing by the **State Madrigal Choir of Giovanni Gabrieli's** "Jubilate Deo" for eight voices and his "Benedictus" for twelve voices) Eng. Col. DDX 20/1).

Modern scores were poorly served by foreign recordists. Best of the lot was **Milhaud's** ballet "L'Homme et son Desir" in a very expensive set by Les Editions Champrosay (Album TC-11) and a modest single disc of **Vaughan Williams's** music for the film "Scott of the Antarctic" (HMV C3834). This latter is hardly a world-shattering score. It's well made, though, and serves its particular purpose with distinction. —A.W.P.

EDITORIAL NOTES

(Continued from page 174)

cause they resented advancements in the record field, return to the fold inevitably with the comment that former opposition to LP had been ruled out. Our correspondence has shown in the past year that the interest in LP reproduction occupies the majority of serious music lovers, while colleges and schools have found it a boon in teaching and promoting music appreciation.

The 45 disc, however, has apparently established itself in other fields—the popular and semi-popular. The advance of sales of this record in the past six months has prompted several other companies to manufacture this little disc. Today, many believe it will be the standard popular record of tomorrow. Thus, what might have been at an earlier date the truly "revolutionary" record, even in the classical field, has by virtue of later-day events been consigned to a high status, but in another field. We predict that the prestige of our famous Red Seal record

will be restored to its proper dignity and place with the advent of its 33 disc.

Nothing in the history of the record business has quite served the industry to such advantage as the LP record. It has given new life and succor to smaller record concerns and prompted the formation of unusual groups of artists with the most serious intentions. It has served modern music as advantageously as any record promulgated in the past twenty years. One is amazed to learn of the response of the record-buying public to Esoteric's single output of Arnold Schoenberg's "Serenade, Op. 24," which came in last month too late for review. Though figures are not available to us, we believe that Columbia's modern musical ventures on LP discs have paid off far better than they did on standard 78s.

In the face of advancing interest in LPs one might be led to believe that the faithful, servicable 78 record would die a natural death. However, considering the worth of many former 78 releases, this is unlikely to happen and such reasoning should be tempered with wisdom of thought before consideration of parting with one's older recordings. For though the sales of 78s may as time goes on become considerably less than those of 33s and 45s, the value of the older 78s will not diminish. Indeed, some are likely to become unrivalled treasures in one's record collection.

Most readers will recall our Editorial, "Tomorrow's Rarities," in the August 1949 issue. There is just reason to believe that our prediction that "the larger percentage of 78 recordings, now being sold at a half of their original values, will command several times their original list prices in a couple of years," was a timely one. That the majority of masters made prior to 1943 are not in the best condition to permit redubbing on 33 or 45 records can be deduced from a recent letter received by our associate, Henry F. Bent, Vice-President of the New York Society of Recorded Music, from Frank M. Folsom, President of the Radio Corporation of America.

In his letter written this past month, Mr. Bent asked Mr. Folsom to use his influence to have some of Victor's older and choicer items re-released on LP discs even though his engineers might not approve of them from a technical point of view. Mr. Folsom's prompt response to that letter is as follows:

"... I am glad you favor our recent decision with respect to the 33 1/3 speed and I hope you will find the new records to be exactly what you want.

"However, I'm afraid that you will not be able to obtain many of the old recordings on 33 1/3 because even though some music lovers might be willing to tolerate the inferior quality characteristics inherent in recordings made years ago, our surveys indicate that today's high technical standards are vital to the widespread acceptance of micro-groove reproduction.

"Rest assured that we will try to re-release as much of our great library as we can while maintaining quality standards with which we simply cannot compromise. Unfortunately, a large part of the catalog of early recordings must remain available only on the old 78 RPM system."

* * *

Mention of the New York Society of Recorded Music, of which your editor is President, prompts us to restate that we welcome visitors to our meetings. From the large response to date, we feel that many more people will find our concerts interesting and helpful in shaping their future libraries of recorded music in the home. We believe that such an organization has not only an assured future but the potentiality of becoming a worthy influence in the future recorded music in this country. Our meetings are held on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month at the Greenwich House Music School, 46 Barrow St. Those unfamiliar with the locality have only to find Sheridan Square in Greenwich Village. The IRT-7th Ave. Subway stops at Sheridan Square, and the 4th Street Station on the Independent Subway System is only a few short blocks from Sheridan Square. On reaching the Square, one walks down 7th Ave. one block to Barrow which goes westward. No. 46 is a half block off 7th Ave.

Guest cards for any meeting can be procured from the Society's Secretary, Mr. Samuel Miller, 150 Bennett Ave., New York 33, N. Y. We hope you will write to Mr. Miller.

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In the past two months, we have been swamped with increasing circulation, and for the first time in our existence, we have had an issue sell out before the end of the month. This was the January issue. Though we ordered an extra supply, we did not figure adequately on the growing interest in the magazine. The avalanche of extra work has naturally retarded our correspondence and to those who have written in asking advice, we beg to state, answers will be forthcoming as soon as it is humanly possible to realize them. While a publication may add new help to facilitate extra work, in a highly specialized field like ours it is not possible to turn over to new help all that we would like to do. Moreover, the first duties of a publication are the functional ones.

Our publishing date is officially the third week of the month. This has been adopted in recent months because review material arrives erratically these days. As printers and binders do not work nowadays on Saturdays or holidays, we have been unfortunately held up longer this month than we hoped. Even if we mail on the 21st, as we did in January, there is no assurance how long the mails will take. It has been our experience in the past year that all second-class mail is needlessly delayed.

COLLECTORS' RECORDS

DONIZETTI: Don Pasquale—Bella siccome un angelo; **Antonio Scotti** (baritone) (1906), and **ROSSINI:** La Danza (Tarantella Napolitana); **Giuseppe Campanari** (baritone) (1906). IRRC 3066, 10" disc, \$1.75.

PUCCINI: Manon Lescaut—In quelle trine morbide; **Lucrezia Bori** (soprano) (1910); and **PONCHIELLI:** La Gioconda—Suicidio!; **Emma Carelli** (soprano) (1906). IRCC 3067, 10" disc, \$1.75.

MOZART: Die Entführung aus dem Serail—Märtern aller Arten, and **MEYERBEER:** Robert le Diable—Gnadenarie (1907); **Lilli Lehmann** (soprano). IRCC 3068, \$2.25.

GOUNOD: Faust—Salve dimora. **Alessandro Bonci** (tenor) (1915); and **PUCCHINI:** La Bohème—Addio, dolce

(Continued on page 208)

The American Record Guide

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RECORD NOTES AND REVIEWS



BACH: Suite No. 3 in D major; **Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra** conducted by **Karl Muenchinger**. London 10" LP disc LPS. 147, \$3.95.

▲ Assuredly, Herr Muenchinger has a flair for the Bachian style. In the quick movements he rightfully refuses to refute the jerky characteristics of the music though he is careful never to permit the rhythmic bounce to become mere chugging. His performance of this suite is the most satisfying one on records, in spite of the excessively slow tempo he employs in the celebrated "Air." It is in the "Overture" that Muenchinger excels all others. The manner in which he shapes this movement makes for true grandeur in style. The whole performance with its purity of sound, obtained from a small, well balanced ensemble, is far ahead of others. One feels this conductor's promised re-

leases of the four suites may well transplant the old Busch and more recent Koussevitzsky ones in the affections of all music lovers, particularly as the recording is so appealing with its tonal brightness. —P.H.R.

BACH: Brandenburg Concerto No. 4 in G major; Brandenburg Concerto No. 6 in B flat major; **The Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra** conducted by **Karl Muenchinger**. London LP disc LLP, 114, \$5.95.

AS FINE as the Busch performances of the "Brandenburg Concertos" are, one feels that more of the later-day romantic feeling is in them than the animated and the rhythmically exact treatment of the true Baroque style. Here, we have more sprightly performances of the faster movements, and a smooth elegance in the slow movements. But what contrives to give these renditions charm and appeal is the purity and brilliance of the ensemble sound and the understanding of the true Bachian spirit with its "unerring sense of contrast." The orchestra is small, in keeping with Bach's specifications, and the

backbone of the ensemble is the harpsichord. There is delightful and refreshing flute playing in the "G major" and warm, rich string playing in the "B flat." The latter is, of course, for strings alone. One looks forward to the balance of the set which is scheduled for early release, especially the fifth in "D major" with its harpsichord solo passages, for the unnamed player of this instrument is a skilled performer.

The recording is comparable to the best of London's first 78 releases, with an appreciable clarity of instrumental timbre.

—P.H.R.

CHOPIN (arr. **Gretchaninoff**): *Les Sylphides*; and **VILLA-LOBOS**: *Uirapurú* — A Symphonic Poem; **Philharmonic Orchestra of New York**, conducted by **Efrem Kurtz**. Columbia LP disc ML-4255, \$4.85.

▲ "Les Sylphides" has long been a popular ballet in the theater and undoubtedly its score appeals to many. Orchestrated Chopin has never appealed to me and "Les Sylphides" with all the efficiency of Gretchanoff is not my dish of tea. Kurtz, an old hand at ballet music, sentimentalizes too much for my taste. His is a far more lush performance of these Chopin pieces than Fiedler's is. If I liked the score, I'm sure I'd prefer to live with the Fiedler version. However, it should be said that Kurtz has had the benefit of better recording.

The Villa-Lobos is an atmospheric tone poem, dating from the 1920s. Kurtz revived it last summer at a stadium concert in New York. A product of its time, it reveals its composer's eclecticism — its instrumental effects and thematic content stir memories though I would not endeavor to enumerate their sources. The program concerns the search of a group of young natives for a legendary Enchanted Bird—Uirapurú. Resenting the invasion of the forest by an unsightly old Indian, the young people beat him and drive him out. A beautiful maiden, armed with bow and arrow lured by the Bird's song appears and pierces its heart with an arrow, whereupon the bird is transformed into a handsome youth. The Huntress, followed by the amazed natives, is about to leave the forest when halted by the notes of a nose-flute. Suspecting the ugly Indian's return for revenge she and the others hide. The unsuspecting youth, how-

ever, boldly confronts the Indian and is slain with an arrow. The maiden then carries his body to a fountain where it is transformed into the beautiful Bird again, which flies singing into the forest. Much ado about nothing! The music is not particularly distinguished, though atmospheric and picturesque. Kurtz gives a first-rate performance of this score which Columbia has excellently recorded.

—P.H.R.

COPLAND: Ballet Suite from "Billy the Kid"; **RCA Victor Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **Leonard Bernstein**. RCA Victor set WDM-1333, three 45 rpm discs, \$3.35.

AT LAST we have moderately full recorded accounts of the music of our first two serious American ballets. Some time ago we got "Rodeo," played by the Dallas Symphony Orchestra under Antal Dorati; now we get "Billy the Kid" in a superb recording of a handsome performance led by Leonard Bernstein.

"Billy the Kid" is superior outdoor music that is by turns gay, meditative, sweet, jolly, and heart-rendering. Its melodic material is mostly made from real and imagined Southwestern folk tunes that are elaborated with striking musical fancy. Its harmonic texture is as clean and clear as fresh spring water, and its instrumentation glows with the luminosity of a Texas sunset.

Those who have seen Ballet Theatre's production of "Billy" must realize how close the artistic collaboration between composer and choreographer must have been, for Copeland's music is at every point a decisive help in realizing the poetic meaning of "Billy." This poetic meaning and its effectiveness in the theatre has been best summed up, I think, by Edwin Denby in his remarkable book, "Looking at the Dance." In commenting on Eugene Loring's choreography of scenes in the life of the notorious outlaw, Denby says: "'Billy' is about the West as it is dreamed of, as it is imagined by boys playing in empty lots in the suburbs of our cities. And for this reason 'Billy' is unreal in its local description, but real in its tragic play. An anthropologist would recognize it as an urban puberty ritual; I like it because there is somewhere in its folderol of stylization the sense that tragedy is natural, and this is, after all, the most interesting emotion that the theatre can present."



10 Classics
judged among best
recordings of 1949

CAPITOL-TELEFUNKEN

The ten Capitol-Telefunken Classics listed here were ranked among 1949's best recorded items by the Recordings Editor of "Saturday Review of Literature" (December 31 issue).

Hear these and other outstanding Capitol-Telefunken Classics at your favorite record store. All are available at both 78 and 45 rpm; many on 33 1/3 rpm.

ALBUMS

BEETHOVEN—Symphony No. 3 in E Flat, Op. 55 ("Eroica")—*Mengelberg—Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra*—78 rpm—\$8.75; 45 rpm—\$6.20; 33 1/3 rpm—\$4.85

HINDEMITH—*Mathis der Maler—Hindemith—Berlin Philharmonic*—78 rpm—\$5.00; 45 rpm—\$3.35; 33 1/3 rpm—\$3.85

SCHUBERT—Quintet in A Major, Op. 114 ("The Trout")—*Franz Rupp and Stross Quartet*—78 rpm—\$6.25; 45 rpm—\$4.30

HAYDN—Symphony No. 94 in G Major ("Surprise")—*Schmidt-Isserstedt conducting Berlin Philharmonic*—78 rpm—\$5.00; 45 rpm—\$3.35; 33 1/3 rpm (includes Mozart's "Eine Kleine Nachtmusik")—\$4.85

TCHAIKOVSKY—Overture Solennelle, '1812', Op. 49—*Mengelberg—Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra*—78 rpm—\$3.75; 45 rpm—\$2.40

STRAVINSKY—The Card Game (Jeu de Cartes)—*Stravinsky conducting Berlin Philharmonic*—78 rpm—\$5.75; 45 rpm—\$4.25; 33 1/3 rpm—\$3.85

SINGLE RECORDS

GLUCK—Overture to Alceste—*Furtwängler—Berlin Philharmonic*—78 rpm—\$1.25; 45 rpm—.95

WAGNER—Prelude to Die Meistersinger—*Mengelberg—Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra*—78 rpm—\$1.25; 45 rpm—.95

VON SUPPÉ—Light Cavalry Overture (Parts 1 and 2)—*Kleiber—Berlin Philharmonic*—78 rpm—\$1.25; 45 rpm—.95

FRANCAIX—Concertino for Piano and Orchestra—*Jean Francaix at piano, with Berlin Philharmonic*—78 rpm—\$1.25; 45 rpm—.95; 33 1/3 rpm (includes Francaix's "Serenade for Twelve Instruments")—\$3.85



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CAPITOL'S MARK
OF MUSICAL MERIT

Instead of giving us more of "Billy the Kid," for example the poignant waltz for the bandit and his sweetheart (available, by the way, on the odd side of the "Rodeo" set), RCA Victor has senselessly filled out this album with "Jingo," one of Copland's "Orchestral Statements." "Jingo," a high-spirited piece of some wit, gets a brisk, animated performance from Bernstein and his men. This work's abrupt ending, however, leaves the listener hanging in the air waiting for the next "Statement"—another good reason why the inclusion of "Jingo" was a mistake.

—C.J.L.

CORELLI: Concerti Grossi, Op. 6, No. 2 in F major; No. 3 in C minor; Sonata da Camera, Op. 1, No. 9, in G major; **The Concert Hall Symphony Orchestra** with **Peter Rybar** and **Anton Fietz** (violins), **Antonio Tusa** (viola da gamba), **Hans Andrea** (harpsichord), conducted by **Henry Swoboda**. Concert Hall LP disc CHC-29, \$4.95.

CORELLI (1653-1713) was the first composer whose work was exclusively instrumental. George Dyson, in his book "The Progress of Music," says: "He stands on a great dividing line. Before him all the masterpieces of music employed voice. After him comes the triumphs of sonata, quartet, concerto, and symphony." Corelli's concertos lie between chamber and concert music, and for this reason are as enjoyable in a small room as in the concert hall. The sensitivity of his instrumental scoring is "still the hall-mark for all good chamber music" (Dyson) and the cultural polish and inherent beauty of his style has never lost its appeal. Quoting Dyson further, Corelli's "pursuit of art was comparable to that of the best madrigal-writing, in which each performer gave an individual and equal share to the combined effect." He was a master in the art of contrasting moods, as the nobility and dignity of his slow movements thrown into relief against the spirited animation of his faster sections indicate.

Of the three works presented on this record, the C minor is the most ambitious. It is equally as imposing and appealing as the more familiar "Christmas Concerto," though it ends in a lighter and gayer manner. The other works, less lengthy, are also sustaining in interest. Anyone who has come under the spell of Corelli will

not wish to miss this disc. (For those who like scores, Broude Bros. publish miniatures of the two concertos from Op. 6.)

Swoboda shows a real feeling for the classical idiom. These performances have been well planned and executed with a harpsichord, which rightly belongs in the early orchestra. The recording has sufficient liveness without the spaciousness of the large concert hall. This serves to preserve intimacy of feeling and gives one a closer view of the string playing.

—P.H.R.

DEBUSSY (trans. Caplet): The Children's Corner Suite; **Leopold Stokowski** and his **Orchestra**. Victor set WDM-1327, three discs, \$3.35.

▲ Though Chou-Chou, Debussy's ill-fated daughter, had no more than ordinary talent for the piano, her father nonetheless devised a suite of pieces for her which are best served by adult performance. The six pieces are so intimately linked to the keyboard that it is not surprising to find much of their delicate and whimsical charm lost in an orchestration. Few would deny that André Caplet has not orchestrated these little works with ingenuity and imagination. But in giving them the semblance of enlarged canvasses, he has obscured the delicate qualities of the original pictures. It is very much like enlarging delicate, fine-lined etchings with a camera, and then applying photographer's water colors.

I suspect however, that many will like these transcriptions which Stokowski interprets with his familiar skill at tonal color and nuance. Like all of this conductor's recordings, this one is most realistic but in that now familiar pattern of Victor which makes one more a partner to the ensemble than a spectator seated at a distance.

—P.H.R.

FRANCAIX: Serenade for 12 Instruments; **Hamburg Chamber Orchestra** conducted by **Eugen Jochum**; and **Concertina for Piano and Orchestra**; **Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra** conducted by **Leo Borchard**. Capitol-Telefunken 10" LP disc L-8051, \$3.95.

THE MUSIC of Francaix has a definite place on records, for almost all of it has a sensitivity and piquancy which is effective in a small room. Its delicate sweetness and acidity are lost in the concert hall. The annotator, Alfred Leonard, neatly pigeonholes Francaix's qualities

when he says, "His music has the quality of a young French wine of noble origin—full-bodied, slightly acid in its rhythmic and harmonic jostlings, easy to take, and, on proper occasion, deliciously intoxicating." The vintage wine drinker can appreciate this music in the proper manner. Those unable to appreciate the delicate qualities of good wine may be led to dismiss Francaix's works as "small-scaled salon music" in the manner of the author of the "Victor Book of Concertos."

The "Concertino" is almost too well known to comment upon, moreover it was reviewed in these pages in October 1949. The "Serenade", scored for two violins, viola, cello, double-bass, flute, clarinet, bassoon, oboe, horn, trumpet and trombone, is new to records in this country. Though cut from the same cloth as the "Concertino," the "Serenade" has a keener fascination in its delectable savoring of contrasting instrumental timbres. The work has four movements with varying moods of gaily, sly humor, and sentiment. Jochum conducts the small ensemble in a manner that suggests his enjoyment of the proceedings. Both recordings, made prior to the war, are quite satisfactory and the LP dubbing has been well contrived.

—P.H.R.

HAYDN: Symphony No. 77 in B flat major; Symphony No. 78 in C minor; **Concert Hall Symphony Orchestra**, conducted by **Henry Swoboda**. Concert Hall LP disc CHC-30, \$4.95.

SO OFTEN Haydn begins his symphonies with a spirited movement, as in these two works, which suggests he might have been saying to himself, "Oh, what a happy day!" This feeling of well-being with its healthy objectivity conceals the composer's ingenuity. In the "B flat" symphony, Haydn is the ingenious economist deriving most of his material in the first movement from his main ideas in its first few bars. In the lovely lyrical Adagio, Haydn smiles. No shadows disturb his thoughts. And in the minuet and brilliant finale he is happy and carefree.

The mood of the "C minor" symphony is more robust in the opening and a bit more serious in the Adagio. The minuet suggests a rustic gathering and the finale is gay and spirited. Geiringer points out in his book that the imitation heard in the middle section of the opening move-

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ment, taken from the subsidiary or second subject, is accompanied by a "sight motive" (a sort of appoggiatura or grace note. A few years later Mozart employed a similar device in the finale of his "Jupiter" symphony. The interested reader can procure a score of the "C minor" (Broude).

Swoboda performs these works with stylistic assurance and spirit. The orchestra, not a large one, is a competent one. I often wonder if such proficient organization can be so easily arranged elsewhere as they are in New York these days. Good recording, with just enough spaciousness of sound to keep the music alive.

—P. H. R.

KALMAN MEMORIES; and **Waldteufel Memories: Robert Stoltz and His Concert Orchestra.** London LP disc LLP. 143, \$5.95.

▲ The first is a fantasia of melodies from the Kalman operettas—"Countess Mariza," "The Circus Princess," etc. The second has four waltzes—"The Skaters," "My Dream," "Estudiantina," "Golden Rain." This is music of diversion which will serve ideally as background music for dinner, etc. Stoltz has a smooth style. None of the performances are spectacular but with the clear, bright recording they should appeal.

—P. G.

PROKOFIEFF: Peter and the Wolf, Op. 67 (A Musical Tale for Children); **The London Philharmonic Orchestra** conducted by **Nicolai Malko**, with **Frank Phillips**, Narrator. London 10" LP disc LPS. 151, \$3.85.

WHAT a delightful bit of whimsy "Peter and the Wolf" is. We older folks are apt to forget this, as its novelty has somewhat worn off and it is not often presented in the concert halls these days for the "edification" of erring adults. But the adults can learn a bit from it and, if not too blasé, find it diverting. Of course, the ideal way to enjoy "Peter" is to play it to a child and watch the effect the unfolding of the tale has and the grasp of the instrumental timbres and themes some children have. There is less pretension in this performance than those that have preceded it. Malko is straightforward in his musical direction and Frank Phillips, despite his British accent, is very natural and sincere.

The recording is good, but the narrator is almost too forward with the result that

turning the gain up for full orchestral sound results in too loud narration. But one does not need to have the orchestral part at a high level, as the clarity of the instruments is excellent. Of course, this disc has a competitor in the Rathbone-Stokowski issue (Columbia LP 4038), which also has the added attraction of being unbroken (it's all on one side) and the Rathbone performance of Stevenson's "Treasure Island" on its reverse face.

—P.H.R.

SCHOENBERG: Serenade (Septet), Op. 24; an ensemble consisting of **Clark Brody** (clarinet), **Eric Simon** (bass-clarinet), **Sal Piccardi** (mandolin), **John Smith** (guitar), **Louis Kramer** (violin), **Ralph Hersh** (viola), **Seymour Barah** (cello), **Warren Gajour** (baritone), conducted by **Dimitri Mitropoulos**. Esoteric LP disc ES1501, \$5.95.

HONORING Arnold Schoenberg's seventy-fifth birthday last year, the International Society for Contemporary Music arranged for the first performance of this work in over twenty-four years, under the direction of Mitropoulos. We are told that the noted conductor endeavored to interest the big record companies in issuing a recording of the work but met with no interest. One of the new, smaller companies promptly offered to back the venture, paying the Union costs, etc., thus making available to the music world a chamber work of Schoenberg which might have remained in manuscript for many more years. It is heartening to know that this courageous venture has resulted in sufficient sales to date to pay for itself. Whether it ever earns lucrative royalties for the conductor and for the sponsors may be a moot question. Suffice it to say, its success to date has prompted the sponsors to consider the recording of another modern work.

Schoenberg's Serenade for seven instruments and baritone voice (the later used in only one of its seven movements) was first performed for a gathering at a private home in Vienna, in 1924. The following year it was given in this country under the direction of Stokowski. Thereafter, it seems to have been neglected, until the ISCM revived it this past year. In this chamber work, the annotator tells us, the composer for the first time "began to create whole pieces integrated in his style which is now referred

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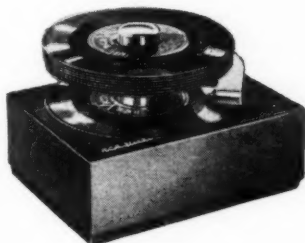
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February, 1950

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to as the 'technique of composition with twelve tones'. The work will fascinate those who are not opposed to the atonal school of music-writing. The composer exploits the seven instruments with great skill, though his handling of the baritone voice in the fourth movement, using a sonnet by Petrarcha for text, proves less effective vocally than some of his other songs written in the atonal style. Curiously, this music, despite its exploitation of dissonance, stems from the romantic era, and like "Verklaerte Nacht" it is both decadent and morbid. Even its scoring, making use of that tinkling instrument the mandolin, so beloved of our grandparents in their callow youths, and the guitar, substantiates its romanticism rather than refutes it. Nor does its dissonance hide its ancestry. In its harmonic structure the work aims for modernism, but it is not as startling or unusual in its rhythmic structure. That the music has its fascination, there can be no doubt. Much of this fascination is however occasioned by completely cerebral workmanship. Yet, the work is regarded by many as one of Schoenberg's most melodious compositions. But melody and cacophony interperse and unless one is following the score (which is available) one may not realize the ingenuity of the composer's workmanship.

The seven movements are: March, Menuet, Variations, Sonnet by Petrarcha, Dance Scene, Song (without words), and Finale. By returning to the tempo and material of the March in the Finale, the composer "unifies the spirit of the whole set of pieces."

The performance, planned originally for the ISCM, is an excellent one. Mitropoulos, long an admired exponent of modern music, directs it with sympathy and understanding. This is undeniably a significant contribution to the scant literature of modern music on records and one can only hope that the many, rather than the few, will prove themselves adventure some enough to give it a real hearing. This is the type of music that will prove doubly fascinating on second and third hearings, so do not pass it up immediately or misjudge its worth on first hearing.

—P.H.R.

RESPIGHI: The Fountains of Rome; Symphony Orchestra of the Augusteo, Rome, conducted by Victor De Sabata.

Victor sets WDM-1337, two discs, \$2.20, or DM-1337, \$3.50.

THIS RELEASE has not reached us as yet. Victor confesses that its record production in the past month has been held up. One suspects the initial LP release has something to do with this. Inasmuch as we rated this recording last year as one of the finest high fidelity jobs of its kind, we feel impelled to write about it. Our familiarity with the recording comes from the excellent H.M.V. pressing. We are given to understand that the 45 is not quite comparable, and for this reason it is that suggested readers hear and compare the 78 and 45 releases.

De Sabata gives a splendid performance of Respighi's brilliantly colorful musical pictures of four of Rome's famous fountains. Intrinsically, this music may not be great, but it has a certain fascination in the glowing tonal effects devised by Respighi. Some of us, who have formerly gazed upon these fountains, may in retrospect feel that they occasioned less flamboyant effect in actuality. Nevertheless what Respighi has done in music is not unlike what noted painters have done in their medium. And who among us does not realize that memory is more happily revived by a vividness in conception. While some tire of this sort of thing, others never do. Perhaps the element of imagination enters into continuance of favorable reactions, and as Respighi leaves little to the imagination of his listeners one can understand why these musical pieces surfeit after a time. —P.H.R.

SCHUBERT: Symphony No. 1 in D major; Winterthur Symphony Orchestra conducted by Henry Swoboda. Concert Hall LP disc CHI-23, \$4.95.

SCHUBERT wrote this symphony at sixteen, while a pupil at the Seminary. With his head full of memories of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, it is not surprising to find derivations in thought and style. This is competent but decidedly verbose music-making. As Arthur Hutchings says in his book on the composer: "The first Symphony is prolix for the same causes which make his last Symphony tremendous. . . Its four movements, not counting the 533 bars of slow introduction, make a length which the most indulgent cannot find heavenly." After that long first movement and the pleasantly lyrical Andante,

the listener may find his attentions lagging. Though the robust menuet and the "happy-go-lucky," initial spontaneity of the finale momentarily revive interest, neither sustains it. For the mood of the former lacks proper relief and that of the latter soon becomes attenuated. That the symphony has historical interest, especially in relation to Schubert's development, one cannot deny. The student of form is recommended to Mosco Carno's article on Schubert's "Orchestral Music" in that excellent book, edited by Gerald Abraham, "The Music of Schubert." It is a book which I believe all admirers of the composer should own.

The Swiss Winterthur Symphony Orchestra is by no means as happily exploited in this work as in others to be found on records. Dr. Swoboda gives this symphony a lively, forthright treatment, but some of the orchestral playing is messy, suggesting insufficient rehearsals. The recording, while wide in range, lacks sufficient hall resonance to clarify the scoring satisfactorily at all times. As it is doubtful that we will have another version of this work for a long time to come, one cannot but be grateful at the adventuresome spirit of all concerned who planned and executed this performance. It seems to me that there is just reason to record this early work and it is quite possible that familiarity will make it more enjoyable than a first, critical listening suggests. —P.H.R.

SIBELIUS: Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 43; **Royal Philharmonic Orchestra**, conducted by **Sir Thomas Beecham**. Victor set WDM-1334, five discs, price \$5.25.

▲ Turning his searching eye to this symphony, Sir Thomas makes the music eloquent, tender and strangely mysterious. While no one will deny that this is music-making par excellence, those familiar with the more exciting reading of Koussevitzky may feel something lacking in this performance. My observances may be occasioned by the fact that it has grown difficult for me to appreciate a work like this chopped up on five discs with the many breaks. Moods are spoiled.

I should have liked to have heard this recording on 78s, not 45s. I have a feeling that something has been lost in the dubbing. Of course, I can be wrong, but after hearing the radical differences be-

tween the H.M.V. 78 releases and the Victor 45 ones of Beecham's "Tapiola" and "Ein Heldenleben." I am dubious. For this recording does not seem startlingly realistic nor always as clean as it should have been. —P.H.R.

SIBELIUS: Finlandia, Op. 26; **The Boston Pops Orchestra** conducted by **Arthur Fiedler**. Victor disc 49-0698, \$95c.

▲ Here we have a full-bodied interpretation of Sibelius's most popular symphonic poem. The clarity of tone and rich quality of the recording give it an advance over other releases, but somehow the 45 version heard by the writer did not have the startling realism expected. It's good, make no mistake, and probably better than any other recording. I would not want the job of making comparisons. Fiedler's conception of this nationalistic opus is solid, masculine and straightforward. But the Beecham version still retains a quality of perception not yet challenged.

—P.G.

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STRAUSS, Johann: On the Beautiful Blue Danube; Roses from the South; Voices of Spring; **The Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra** conducted by **Clemens Krauss**, and Thousand and One Nights; Acceleration Waltz; **The Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra** conducted by **Erich Kleiber**. Capitol-Telefunken LP disc P-8061, \$4.95.

▲ Both Krauss and Kleiber are old hands at playing the waltzes of Johann Strauss. Of the two, Kleiber is the more persuasive interpreter, for his is music-making that makes sense—smooth and continuous with an artistic use of rubato. Krauss tends to excessive rubato that breaks up the rhythm and stresses sentiment. Perhaps, it's part of the Viennese tradition, but one prefers musical taste with tradition. I've always enjoyed hearing Kleiber perform a Strauss waltz and because I find his offerings on this disc so completely satisfying I find myself wishing that he had been the conductor of the other three waltzes.

These recordings date back but are nonetheless smoothly contrived, and the sound is sufficiently realistic to please. Fortunately, the Kleiber performances are consistently clean and clear, but there is some fuzzy reproduction in the Krauss performances, notably "Voices of Spring."

—P.H.R.

TCHAIKOVSKY: Capriccio Italian, Op. 45; and **BIZET:** Carmen—Suite; **Columbia Symphony Orchestra**, conducted by **Sir Thomas Beecham**. Columbia LP disc ML-4287, \$4.95.

SIR THOMAS imbues the much belabored Tchaikovsky score with a lyricism that affirms the composer's intentions marked in the score, and moreover gives the music a charm and freshness that we have never heard. Sir Thomas neither eschews nor refutes the sentiment or the excitement of the score but judiciously tempers them to make pure music.

As for "Carmen," no one has quite been as convincing as Beecham rendering it either as a suite in the concert hall or in the theater. Sir Thomas's uncanny sense of color and rhythmic nuance is consistently delightful. Though the suite is arbitrarily arranged, it makes sense in the way that Sir Thomas performs it. Those who own the older recording that the conductor made with the London Philharmonic Orchestra will note a slight change in the sequence of events.

Had we not heard Sir Thomas's declaration of his complete satisfaction with these recordings we would have suspected the same. For Columbia assembled a fine orchestra for him with some of the top first desk men in New York including Reginald Kell (clarinet), Julius Baker (flute), Robert Bloom (oboe) and Leonard Rose (cello). What can be done with an orchestra, assembled for an occasion, is accomplished by Sir Thomas with amazing aplomb. No orchestra has played better for him on records. The Tchaikovsky must have afforded the conductor considerable gratification considering the poor performance obtained at an earlier date with the Philharmonic-Symphony of New York, Swell recording! —P.H.R.

TCHAIKOVSKY: Serenade in C Major, Op. 48; **Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra** conducted by **Willem Mengelberg**; and **DVORAK:** Serenade for Strings in E Major, Op. 22; **Berlin Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra** conducted by **Hans von Benda**. Capitol LP P-8060, \$4.85.

HERE is a noteworthy record of two charming works for string orchestra. The Tchaikovsky is well played by the Amsterdam Concertgebouw's string section and read with surprisingly good taste by Mengelberg. Only in the Waltz movement does Mengelberg show his usual bent for monkeying around with dynamics and continuity.

The seldom-performed Dvorak Serenade is played discerningly by members of the Berlin Philharmonic under von Benda's direction. The work contains an abundance of rich melody that in the first section is elaborated in an exquisite manner. Such extraordinary invention is seldom found in Dvorak's output. A melodic spendthrift, the Czech composer, even in as good a piece as this one, had enough tunes to have made at least another composition of equal length. This recorded performance, it must be added, does not include the Waltz movement.

The recordings of both Serenades are satisfactory; the surfaces are occasionally noisy. —C. J. L.

THOMSON: Louisiana Story; **Philadelphia Orchestra** conducted by **Eugene Ormandy**; Five Portraits; **Philadelphia Orchestra** conducted by **Virgil Thomson**. Columbia 10" LP disc ML2087, \$3.85.

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ONE of the outstanding recordings of the new year is Eugene Ormandy's superb performance of Virgil Thomson's Pulitzer Prize winning suite from the film, "Louisiana Story."

"Louisiana Story," an absorbing semi-documentary film directed by Robert Flaherty, has its setting in the bayou region of Louisiana. There a group of oil-well workers come, bringing their various machineries, to attempt to obtain the black gold hidden by the water of the bayou marshes and the countless layers of soil and rock. The film depicts their activity as it is reflected in the life and spirit of a young Acadian boy living in the region.

Thomson's orchestral suite, derived from the music he composed for the film, consists of four movements. The opening "Pastoral" is a landscape piece describing the bayous. Also present are musical materials that reflect the young boy's reaction to the coming of the well workers and, in particular, their amphibious bulldozer which is used in clearing a section of marsh bed so that the derricks can be erected. This movement, beautifully made and intensely descriptive, makes use of some lovely Acadian folk tunes.

The "Chorale" represents the boy playing in a tree with his pet raccoon and his wonder as he sees from this perch the construction of a derrick, watching it reach higher and higher toward the sky. Thomson's use of gleaming brass chords moving stately, powerfully, inevitably up the musical scale is indeed a brilliant graphic touch.

A "Passacaglia" follows the "Chorale." It is concerned with the boy's curiosity in examining a nest of alligator's eggs that he has discovered and has intended to steal. This movement concludes with the approach of the mother alligator and continues without pause into the last section entitled "Fugue."

The "Fugue" accompanies the boy's fight to capture the alligator which he thinks has killed his pet raccoon. The excitement of this violent action is mirrored in the short agitated rhythmic figure that is the core of the fugue.

This extraordinary suite, so rich in melodic material, so fascinating in its harmonic texture and instrumentation, may well be one of the first compositions made from film music to make its way into standard repertory. I hope it does. No other music of this type that I know so richly deserves that priceless reward.

"Five Portraits" was reviewed in October 1945. These pieces have more a personal than universal meaning.

—C. J. L.

VIVALDI: Concerto Grosso in A Minor, Op. 3, No. 8; **Amsteram Concertgebouw Orchestra** conducted by **Willem Mengelberg**. Capitol-Telefunken set EBL8057, two discs, \$3.75.

▲ In my review of the Paul Schmitz-Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra performance of this charming work (Deutsche Grammophon set 21) in the November, 1949 issue, I commented that "Schmitz and his men give a more honest performance of this music than does Mengelberg on Telefunken, and (it should be added) play the authentic last movement rather than the anonymous music that Mengelberg substituted in its place."

By "more honest," I meant a closer adherence to the letter and spirit of the score. Mengelberg indulges in a few dynamic fancies and in some mannered phraseology in this music that asks for straight-forward treatment.

The odd side of this set contains Mengelberg's excessively ponderous performance of Bach's famous Air from the Third Suite.

The recording in this set is quite good. The surfaces are satisfactory.

—C.J.L.

WOLF: Italian Serenade; **German Philharmonic Orchestra of Prague** conducted by **Joseph Keilberth**. Capitol 45 rpm disc 6F-86003, \$.95.

▲ This is a satisfying traversal of Hugo Wolf's ever-charming work. Keilberth uses the customary Reger edition of this orchestral version of the Italian Serenade. I am told that the original string quartet version of the score is again available on H.M.V. beautifully performed by the Budapest String Quartet. The Capitol 45 disc is well recorded and has quiet surfaces.

—C.J.L.

Concert Hall Limited Issues

VIVALDI: Concerto Grosso in D major; Symphonies in F major and C major; **Concert Hall Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **Henry Swoboda**. Concert Hall Limited Release D-1, LP disc.

DVORAK: Piano Quartet in E flat major, Op. 87; **A. Balsam** (piano), **P. Ry-**

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La Gioconda: Dance Of The Hours—Ponchielli. Boston Pops Orchestra. 12-1059, \$1.25. 49-0676 (45 rpm), 95¢.

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Tannhäuser: *Elisabeth's Prayer*—Wagner. Philharmonic Orch., Issay Dobrowen, Cond. 12-1062, \$1.25. 49-0783 (45 rpm), 95¢.

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José Iturbi Plays "That Midnight Kiss" Music: *Etude in C Minor, Op. 10, No. 12* ("Revolutionary")—Chopin; *Malagueña*—Albéniz; and *Allegro Appassionato, Op. 70*—Saint-Saëns. DM-1344, \$3.00. WDM-1344 (45 rpm), \$2.20.

DOROTHY KIRSTEN—ROBERT MERRILL

Highlights From Show Boat: *Make Believe, Of Man River, Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man, You Are Love, Why Do I Love You?*, *Bill*—Jerome Kern, Oscar Hammerstein II. Orch., John Scott Trotter, Cond. DM-1341, \$4.00. WDM-1341 (45 rpm), \$3.35.

SERGE KOUSSEVITZKY

Gymnopédie No. 1—Satie; orchestrated by Claude Debussy. Boston Symphony Orch. 12-1060, \$1.25. 49-0771 (45 rpm), 95¢.

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Vilia (from "The Merry Widow")—Franz Lehár. *If You Were Mine* (based on "Romance")—Anton Rubinstein; arranged by Andre Previn; words by William Katz. Orchestra, Robert Armbruster, Conductor. 10-1512, \$1.00. 49-0773 (45 rpm), 95¢.

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bar (violin), **O. Kromer** (viola), **A. Tusa** (cello). Concert Hall Limited Release D-2, LP disc.

MOZART: Symphony in B flat major, K. 182; Symphony in A major, K. 114; **Winterthur Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **Henry Swoboda**. Concert Hall Limited Release D-3, LP disc.

THESE ARE the first three releases of the 1949-50 series of Concert Hall Society Limited Recordings and are available by subscription only. As in the past, after sampling the contents of CH's offerings, we regret that such valued contributions to the phonograph are not available to everyone.

The Vivaldi "Concertino Grosso" is a first-rate example of the master's work in contrasting sonorities, in making music of healthy stimulation and imaginative content. His two symphonies, more in the nature of overtures though combining the concerto grosso style, are refreshing, spontaneous works, light in spirit and not far removed from the spirit of the "opera buffa." On first hearing, the "C major" made the greater appeal, but turning back, I found the "F major" equally delightful. Perhaps, the two works should be played separately on different occasions.

The Dvorak work has long been needed on records, for it is one of the composer's finest chamber scores. It is the second of two piano quartets, the other having been written 14 years earlier. (Both piano quartets were recorded before the war by English Decca but the recordings were never made available in this country). The present work stands in close proximity to Dvorak's piano quintet; but here the invention and workmanship are more original, as the spirit of Schubert lurks over the quintet. Both melodically and harmonically this quartet reveals the mature master—the opposing ideas, whether energetic or poetic, reveal strength of purpose and imagination. One is not likely to forget quickly, or for that matter grow tired of, the beautiful slow movement with its poetic richness and masculine sentiment. The performance is a musically distinguished one.

Mozart's symphonies, dating from his 'teens, reveal the uncanny certainty of the young composer. He handles the form with the same efficiency and assurance of Haydn, and often—as in the opening movement of the B flat—with a boldness

belying his years. The A major is closer to the Italian sinfonia and to me proves more immediately appealing, perhaps because its ingratiating buoyancy suggests the theater. I note that Einstein says that the B flat, which is Italian in spirit, "may have been written in anticipation of an expected opera contract." It, too, is not unlikely an early overture. The latter has three contrasted movements while the former includes a short minuet section.

Dr. Swoboda's renditions of the Vivaldi are effectively contrived, more ingratiating than we usually associate with the performance of this composer's music. The Mozart symphonies are neatly and cleanly played with satisfying affirmation of their grace and buoyancy. Needless to say, the recordings have been expertly handled, but for best results one should have an 800 turn-over on the bass, or bass-booster that allows wide leeway without undue hum. —P.H.R.



BACH: Clavier Concerto in E major; **Louise Thyron** with **Pro Musica Orchestra** conducted by **Arthur Goldschmidt**; and Violin Concerto in E major; **Ruggiero Ricci** (violin) with **Lamoureux Orchestra** conducted by **Eugene Bigot**. Vox-Polydor LP disc PLP 6630, \$5.95.

THE SELDOM-PLAYED "Clavier Concerto in E major" has not been previously recorded. A wholly delightful score with joyous and spirited outer movements and a gentle, meditative Siciliano, it will be welcome on records as all instrumental works of Bach have been. Bach thought highly of this music for he reused its first and second movements in his Cantata No. 169 and its finale as an introduction to his Cantata No. 49. The performance of this music has polish and animation. Mme. Thyron, a newcomer to me, is an adept Bach performer with a light, sure fingered technique which is fitting to the music. Goldschmidt handles the orchestral forces with appropriate rhythmic life and smoothness.

The performance of the familiar "Violin Concerto" is another story. While Ricci

plays with tonal expressivity and poise, Bigot's orchestral accompaniment is dull and lacking in essential spaciousness. In the fast movements, Ricci is forestalled in giving appropriate life to the rhythmic lines with the phlegmatic orchestral treatment. Moreover, the solo violin is often poorly balanced and not clearly distinguishable from the instrumental ensemble.

Though hardly wide range, the recording is clear and smooth enough in both works. But after listening to the Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra's recordings, it leaves something to be desired.

—P.H.R.

MOZART: Horn Concerto No. 2 in E flat, K.417; Horn Concerto No. 4 in E flat, K.495; **Dennis Brain** (horn) with the **Philharmonic Orchestra**, conducted by **Walter Suesskind** and with the **Halle Orchestra**. Columbia Microgroove disc ML2088, price \$3.85.

WIND PLAYERS, and especially horn players, are apt to nominate Mozart as their instrument's foremost champion in matters of quantity as well as quality. He provided them with a tremendous amount of extraordinarily fine solo and ensemble music, neglecting only the trumpet and the trombone (there is a "Divertimento, K.187," however, for 2 flutes, 5 trumpets and 4 tympani and a lengthy trombone solo in the "Requiem").

Mozart wrote four concertos and a rondo for horn, plus a quintet for horn and strings (K.407) that is really a concerto with string quartet accompaniment. All of the above, with the exception of the first concerto (which is in D major) are in the key of E flat, most probably because the E flat open (valveless) horn was considered the most tractable instrument for complicated solo ventures. They were composed for a close friend of Mozart, an accomplished hornist named Leutgeb (or Leitgeb) who later distinguished himself by achieving the economic independence most musicians only dream of by the establishment of a cheesemongering business in Vienna.

I have always been more than a little horrified by the astounding statement in Grove's Dictionary that "The horn Concertos were evidently intended as a jest; they were written at breakneck speed, and the rondo of the first (K.412) is scrawled over with extravagant mock-directions." Now it is perfectly true that many of the

private jokes between Mozart, the master, and Leutgeb, the disciple, are to be found scribbled over the original manuscripts Leutgeb used for performance, and that Mozart used four colors of ink in writing cut the fourth concerto to annoy his good friend, but these jests have nothing whatsoever to do with the quality of the music.

Dennis Brain, son of the eminent horn virtuoso Aubrey Brain, whose many Victor recordings are models of good taste and superior musicianship, is a strong-lipped player with assured technical dexterity and a rather more penetrating tone than we are accustomed to hear from the top hornists in this country. The quality is caused, I would imagine, in part by the employment of a smaller-bore instrument than the German-type horn we favor here, and in part by the heavy requirements of modern orchestral routine, which tend to coarsen a soloist's sound. Brain's trills are the weakest part of his technique, so much so, in fact, that one English critic was moved to remark that "horns were not made for trilling", a statement that would have caused Wagner, for one, considerable surprise.

All in all, these are as good performances as one is likely to find. They do justice to the scores which, while not earth-shattering, are in the best Mozart tradition. The "Fourth Concerto," recorded in 1946, was released here in the fall of 1947 as Columbia set X-285; the "Second," released in England in September 1947, has been available only on imported pressings. There is a marked difference in tone quality between the English 78s and the LP disc, the excellent characteristics of the former being to a great extent dissipated in the transference to the slower speed. The LP disc is still a good buy, however; don't overlook it.

—A.W.P.

VIVALDI (arr. d'Indy): Concertos for Cello and Strings—in B flat major and E minor; **Leo Rostal** conducting the **Concert Hall String Ensemble**. Concert Hall LP disc CHC-37, \$4.95.

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TWENTY YEARS ago when "The Gramophone" in England was pioneering much needed chamber music on records, its National Gramophonic Society issued two records containing the "E minor" concerto, played by George Pitsch and Mangeot Quartet. Through the years, this release has been one of our favorite chamber music recordings, and we are most gratified to have this new, up-to-date recording of it along with one of its equally appealing companions. Vivaldi wrote five "Sonates Concertantes" for solo cello, indicating the intended accompanying harmony by means of figured bass. In realizing that figured bass and scoring the works for string orchestra, d'Indy provided distinguished concert forms.

Though these works can be played with string quartet accompaniment, there is much to say for augmented strings. The latter realizes better the rhythmic vigor and harmonic richness of the music. In both concertos, which comprise two slow and two fast movements, the songful characteristics of the noble Largos are splendidly contrasted by the lively, rhythmically energetic fast sections. Though the element of virtuosity prevails in both works, it never exceeds its bounds, and one does not listen long before realizing that true inspiration prevailed in the creation of these scores.

Leo Rostal, who will be remembered as a member of the Lener Quartet, is a solo cellist of distinction. His refinement of style and his technical accomplishments are advantageously exploited in these compositions. The accompanying ensemble, not a large one, is an efficient group. The recording is excellently realized with just enough resonance behind the players to make for needed realism. —P.H.R.



BACH: Unaccompanied Suites for Cello —No. 4 in E flat, No. 5 in C minor; **Pablo Casals.** Victor set DM-1302, 7 discs, \$9.75.

THESE WORKS, known as suites or sonatas (they are actually in the suite form), are formidable compositions and there are problems imposed upon player and listener alike. There is little sensual

appeal in them as Bach was mainly concerned with technical problems. In a way, they are glorified exercises for a virtuoso performer and one can hardly imagine a finer one than Casals. I believe these were recorded some years back (I have no accurate information as to just when) as Casals is said to have made all six for the Bach Society, which was formed in 1934. The other four suites were issued in England in 1938 and 1939 and in this country by Victor a short time later.

No one in our day was better equipped to play this music of Bach than Casals, for the technique developed by this extraordinary musician has added to the art of cello-playing. The violin fingerings and violin bowing style which Casals developed permit greater smoothness, and faultless intonation. No other cellist who I have heard communicates a comparable degree of eloquence and exhibition, or achieves such subtle graduations of light and shade. No musician requires counsel on how to listen to these works; but the layman, many of whom shudder at unaccompanied Bach, should be advised to try immediately the Sarabandes from both suites. Here he will find true poetic beauty. The Prelude to the Fifth has a nobility which can hardly fail to impress, and the Courante of the Fourth is favored by many musicians as are the same suites' Bourrees and the Gigue in the French style of the Fifth.

Music like this does not offer great recording problems and it is doubtful whether more modern reproductions would have served any more advantageously the art of the player. —P.H.R.

BEETHOVEN: Trio in G major, Op. 1, No. 2; **Artur Balsam** (piano), **Daniel Guilet** (violin), **Andre Navarra** (cello). Concert Hall LP disc CHC-27, \$4.95.

AT VIENNA in 1795, Beethoven made his bow, as a regular composer with his three trios, Op. 1. The works were produced at a soirée at Prince Lichnowsky's, immediately "commanding the most extraordinary attention." In those days, their "mastery and boldness" was noted. Today, these works seem rather simple and derivative, yet their beauty prevails. Though the present work owes much to Haydn, it shows a stronger personal feeling than many of Haydn's own trios. It can be hardly said the world has outgrown these early works, even though

most music listeners concern themselves more with the greater Beethoven. But one who admires chamber music should reserve a place in his affections for these early compositions which remind us of a most talented young man in his twenty-first year looking forward while still retaining rococo characteristics of his time. Moreover, they are appealing, reflecting a happy frame of mind. There is a tranquil beauty in the slow movement and an engaging vivacity in the finale which immediately caught my fancy.

The performance of this music by three skilled chamber musicians is efficient and expressive, and the recording is excellent.

—P. H. R.

COWELL: Four Declamations with Return; **GIDEON.** Fantasy on a Javense Motive; **PERLE:** Lyric Piece; **TCHEREPINE:** Twelve Preludes: No. 5 and No. 7; **WEBER:** Two Pieces for Cello and Piano; **WEBERN:** Drei Kleine Stuecke, Op. 11; **Seymour Barab** (cello) and **William Masselos** (piano). Paradox LP dic PL 10001, price \$3.85.

I MUST ADMIT to being more than a little baffled by these pieces, not because of any particularly indigestible quality in their makeup, but rather because, as a unit, they defy description. Aside from the Webern "Drei Kleine Stuecke", which seem to be little more than an experimental curiosity couched in the frugal, bare-bones style that was his contribution to the history of music, the rest of this group is healthy enough in its intellectual outlook.

There is nothing particularly startling about the other pieces. While at the moment it seems doubtful if any of them will earn a place in the standard cello repertoire, meagre as that may be, they are not unpleasant for home listening. Nothing on this disc, however, can begin to compare with either the Barber or the Martinu cello sonatas, two works that I nominate as the outstanding new cello music of the last ten years.

Barab and Masselos present their program sympathetically and with conviction. So far as can be reckoned by this unfamiliar music, they are good players. Paradox Records, one of the new companies devoted to recordings of less than obvious commercial possibilities, has provided them with good engineering and quiet surfaces.

A.W.P.

HINDEMITH: Sonata in D, Op. 11 No. 2; **POULENC:** Sonata; **Louis Kaufman** (violin) and **Artur Balsam** (piano). Capitol LP disc P-8063, price \$4.85.

TWO VERY DIFFERENT fellows here sleeping in the same bed, both at or near the top of their schools of writing. The Hindemith work, an early piece published in 1920, is a strange mixture of that sturdy composer's later, uncompromising cerebral exercises and a carry-over from the romantic doings of Reger and Mahler. Although it can not boast the concentrated power of the more recent "Sonata for Unaccompanied Violin" (Vox Album 692), it has many virtues that will become more apparent after a number of hearings.

The Poulenc sonata was written in memory of the great Spanish poet Garcia Lorca, who was liquidated by Generalissimo Franco's hoodlums in 1936. The composer's style is more lyric, his sentiment more deeply rooted than in the examples of his instrumental works that we usually hear. The poetry of Lorca must have made a deep impression upon Poulenc. Sorrowness for the Spaniard's untimely end and bitterness against the forces that caused it lie deep within the pages of the score. It is a fine work, more listenable and more communicative than its bed-fellow, a distinguished contribution to the literature for violin and piano.

Kaufman and Balsam do more than justice to their assignment. The former's elegant style is perfect for the Hindemith; he might have been a trifle more elemental in the Poulenc. The engineering is a credit to the enterprise, a better than usual balance between performers being maintained.

—A.W.P.

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PROKOFIEFF: Sonata in F Minor, Op. 80; and Sonata in D Major, Op. 94; **Joseph Szigeti**, violin, with **Joseph Levine** and **Leonid Hambro**, pianists. Columbia LP ML4257, price \$4.85.

HERE are two recent sonatas of Prokofiev written in his newly-espoused neo-romantic form. The D Major Sonata, though it bears a later opus number, antedates the F Minor creation. The F Minor Sonata was started in 1938 but was not completed in its present form until 1946. The D Major Sonata was completed in 1944.

Both works reflect what I consider a genuine attempt by Prokofiev at an expressive about face in composition. Prokofiev made his reputation, won the hearts of most musicians with his high-spirited wit and irony, his imaginative fancy, and his welcome gifts of satirizing any accepted musical form. His output in the past decade or so contain, so far as I know, only a glimmer of those past achievements. Since he has been writing in this new romantic style, he has turned out scarcely a single work (with the possible exception of the Fifth Symphony) that I think will stay in the standard repertory.

His musical language appears to have grown thick and coarse. His pieces sound heavy, dull, soggy for the most part. All of these complaints I have can be found in three movements of the F Minor Sonata. While the D major opus is a sturdier work and sounds clean and brighter, its melodic material is a little too poor in quality to sustain its elaboration.

Joseph Szigeti, one of Prokofiev's most outspoken champions, plays well, if a trifle roughly in the F Minor, and plays superbly in the D Major. He gets good assistance from each of his accompanists. The recording in the F Minor is muddy and cold in sound; the D Major is good, though the balance between the instruments is not all that it should be. Surfaces are satisfactory.

—C.J.L.



BARTOK: Roumanian Dance No. 1; Bagatelle No. 2; Burlesque — "A Bit Drunk"; Allegro Barbaro; Suite (Op. 14). **Bela Bartok** (piano). Bartok Recording Studio 10" LP disc BRS-003,

price \$3.85.

BARTOK: Improvisations (Op. 20); Out of Doors Suite. **Leonid Hambro** (piano). Bartok Recording Studio LP disc BRS-002, price \$4.95.

THIS PAIR of LP discs from the studio of Peter Bartok (the composer's son) represents a cross-section of Bela Bartok's piano music. Or, perhaps, "piano music" is not the best term; one should merely substitute "music." Bartok himself was a superb pianist, and he thoroughly knew the potentialities of his instrument, but more than nearly any other composer he scorned orthodox pianistic effect. He tried to get away from the Chopin-Schumann-Liszt formulae and traditions, substituting a muscular, quasi-percussive, powerfully rhythmic scheme. When he wanted to, he could out-Debussy Debussy, but for the most part he brought something new to the instrument. The new music — the really new music — speaks through him.

Saturated as he was in the old Hungarian melos, a folk tinge marks most of his music. Even where, as in the "Suite," he was careful to state that the thematic material was original, one immediately senses his ethnic background. The "Improvisations," "Out of Doors Suite" and most of the smaller pieces on the ten-inch disc are, however, frankly national. Some of the pieces are harmonically ultra-dissonant, others are barbarically rhythmic, a few verge on impressionism, but all could have come from no other musical mind. Sections like "The Night's Music" in "Out of Doors" are absolutely amazing. As nature painting, only Bartok's "Third Piano Concerto" (the pages pertaining to the fields at night) or the garden scene in Ravel's "L'Enfant et les Sortilèges" can approach it. Of all composers, Bartok had the most wonderfully sensitive ear for color, texture and pure sound. All of this can be found in "The Night's Music"; and, unlike some of the program music of the "descriptive" composers, it remains as much music as description.

There is no need to analyze these discs piece by piece. The music on them is the work of a great composer. It may need familiarity, since Bartok made no concessions, and some of the excerpts on first hearing may sound extremely difficult of comprehension; but any effort put in to understanding them will repay the intelligent listener as will the music of few other composers. It remains to be said that the

quality of the recording on the 10" disc is not especially good, though it cannot hide the impressiveness of Bartok's piano playing; and that Hambro's superbly recorded performance reveals one of America's best pianists in fine form. — H. C. S.

BRAHMS: Sonata No. 3 in F minor, Op. 5; **Julius Katchen** (piano); London Gramophone LP disc LLP-122, \$5.85.

BRAHMS: Sonata No. 3 in F minor, Op. 5; **Shura Cherkassky** (piano). Vox LP disc VLP-6260, \$4.85.

▲ Long-playing recording of the piano have not been too successful. Indeed, some are very bad and no more sound like a piano than Aunt Tilly used to sound like a canary. It comes therefore, as somewhat of a surprise to find the above two discs providing characteristic quality, true to the piano. The London Gramophone disc is the best reproduction of the piano I have heard on an LP to date. The Vox is good, tonally realistic but less impressive in range and in the clarity of the bass. But it should also prove pleasurable to the ears especially ears that are familiar with good piano quality in the home.

Both performances have their attributes, for both pianists are competent performers. Mr. Katchen, a young American artist has a great deal of a young man's zest, while Mr. Cherkassky, an older artist, has a more romantic mellowness. Technically, both are proficient players, but Mr. Katchen has the more incisive grasp of the keys and surely he brings out more of the "grimly virile" quality of the first subject of the opening movement and of the coda. But Mr. Cherkassky plays with more feeling the delicate romantic qualities of the second subject and of the lovely Brahms' "Andante," which "embodies the very essence of youthful romanticism." Young Katchen's performance, however, is a remarkable debut on records, for he not only reveals a sure grasp of the music but a sensible perception of Brahms' style. Moreover, he has been given stunning recording which may well prove the envy of a lot of pianists. A choice of these two readings of one of Brahms' most popular piano works will be a personal one. Both are preferred to the older performances of Grainger and Bauer. —P. H. R.

MENDELSSOHN: Sonata No. 6 in D Minor, Op. 65; **J. S. BACH:** Prelude in G; Sinfonia to Cantata No. 106; Sinfonia to Cantata No. 156; Chorale Prelude, "Be Merciful to Me"; Chorale Prelude, "All Glory be to God on High";

E. Power Biggs (organ). Columbia Microgroove disc ML2076, price \$3.85.

HERE is a facet of Mendelssohn's personality that is generally overlooked. We are all familiar with his orchestral and choral compositions; most of us have heard of his energetic activities in resurrecting unplayed works of other composers; but few of us, with the exception of organists, have taken the trouble to discover that Mendelssohn, besides being himself a superb organist, was in all probability the greatest composer for that instrument since Bach, and along with the more recent Rheinberger and Reger, the most important of 19th century German organ composers. The six organ sonatas rank with the three Preludes and Fugues of



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Opus 37, the "Andante and Variations in D" and the "Allegro in B flat" as masterful contributions to the literature of the instrument.

The Sonata in question is in variation form, based on a melody by that ubiquitous, uniquely gifted composer, Anon., the tune also being employed in connection with Luther's versified form of the Lord's Prayer. The Bach pieces on the other side of the disc are something of a dog's breakfast, an assembly of minor tidbits that could be dubbed "an organ pops concert."

Biggs' interpretative personality is rather drab, so that, notwithstanding his undoubted technical prowess, these Bach selections are a bit lacking in profile. The Mendelssohn Sonata has enough innate strength to overcome the lack of contrilutory coloring and is therefore far more successful. The recording is very clean, preserving the organ tone with admirable fidelity.

If you find the Mendelssohn work agreeable, try the Sonata No. 1 in F minor, also from Opus 65, which is to be found in an album (Victor set DM-1177) of organ music played by the highly-esteemed Virgil Fox, who presides at the manuals of Riverside Church in New York.

—A.W.P.

SCHUMANN: Fantasiestuecke (Op. 12); **Artur Rubinstein** (piano). Victor set WDM-1335, three discs, price \$3.35.

HERE'S another entry in the "It's About Time" department. When was the last recording of these wonderful pieces? Bauer, I believe, 'way back when.

Schumann composed it in 1837, and it is as fresh as ever. The composer himself thought they were among his best pieces (there are eight to the set), and he asked Clara, his wife, to play them in public in preference to the "Carnaval." In his Schirmer edition of the "Fantasiestuecke," Harold Bauer writes that the title was apparently taken from a set of stories by E. T. A. Hoffmann. The names of the individual pieces are: "Des Abends," "Aufschwung," "Warum," "Grillen," "In der Nacht," "Fabel," "Traumeswirren," and "Ende vom Lied." Some of these, the first

three especially, are often played in concert detached from the set. "Traumeswirren" also has a habit of turning up when a light-fingered pianist like Barere is around.

Rubinstein gives a fine performance, and one wishes that he'd record more Schumann. He has the idiom down very well: a combination of pianistic control (Schumann is not easy to play) and romantic coloring. His planning here is carefully considered; and while he never lets us forget that he is a virtuoso pianist, he clinches the point that he can be an intelligent one. The way he brings out the inner lines in pieces like "Des Abends" or "Warum" is really worthy of note. Any reservations about his performance are purely personal. One wonders, though, why he tends slightly toward percussiveness in such sections as the fast parts of "Fabel" or the B flat section of "Ende vom Lied," where he uses little pedal and seems to be seeking a clean but bleak effect. But, as I say, this is a purely personal reaction; and in the main his performance is one of sympathy and feeling. If any more Schumann is being considered, how about the Op. 4 "Intermezzi" or the Op. 20 "Humoresque," both superb examples of Schumann at his best, both hitherto neglected? —H. C. S.



MASSENET: Manon—Voyons Manon; and **LEONCAVALLO:** I Pagliacci—Qual fiamma avea nel guardo; **Bidu Sayao** (soprano) with **Metropolitan Opera Orchestra**, conducted by **Pietro Cimara**. Columbia disc 72899, \$1.25.

▲ Sayao remains one of the loveliest Manons of our day. How sweetly she sings, conveying Manon's anxiety of her lot in the first act of that opera when after seeing some brilliantly costumed young women she thinks upon her approaching life in a convent. As Nedda, she is less successful. Surprisingly she conveys the drama of the text in the recitative but in the "Bird Song" proper her voice is not big enough to suggest Nedda's climactic fervor. Yet, as in all things this singer essays, she is the finished artist. Columbia has given her excellent recording.

—J.N.

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OFFENBACH: The Tales of Hoffman—Complete Opera; Raoul Jobin (Hoffman); Renée Dora (Olympia); Vina Bovy (Giuiletta); Geori Boué (Antonina); Fanély Revoil (Nicklausse); André Pernet (Coppélius); Charles Soix (Dapertutto); Roger Bourdon (Dr. Miracle); Charles Cambon (Schlemil), etc., with Chorus and Orchestra du Théâtre National de l'Opéra Comique, conducted by André Cluytens. Columbia LP set SL-106, 3 discs, \$14.55.

REVUEING this performance in our June 1949 issue, Mr. Peckham commented that this presentation of Offenbach's most famous and popular opera "is a faithful reproduction of a capably mounted Paris production, emphasizing the vices and virtues of available local talent. By International standards the vocalism leaves a good deal to be desired. The tenor Raoul Jobin is bothered by the high tessitura of Hoffman's role. . . The leading ladies—Bovy, Doria, and Geori Roué—sing with suitable Gallic vivacity and shrillness; the men—the producer has seen fit to assign the four roles usually sung by one artist to four different singers—are in general very good. Particularly agreeable is Charles Soix's sonorous projection of Dapertutto's air, "Scintille diamants."

"In spite of the vocal shortcomings, which are no more than one could expect to find in the average performance at any major opera house, this set has many enjoyable moments and should be an important addition to operatic libraries. One of the most satisfactory features is the employment of the monologist-comedian, Bouvil (si peu tenor, as the accompanying notes describe him) in the comic tenor parts. Unquestionably, a great deal of thought and planning went into the preparation of this set."

There is a general satisfactoriness to this performance and I concur with the above remarks in general, though I would like to say Doria and Bovy sound very well indeed on my equipment. Neither are shrill or unpleasant to my ears. Jobin's Hoffman is competent but colorless. The role deserves a more vital personality. Memories of Dalmores and Jörn are reawakened. The noted French tenor was an ideal Hoffman, his artistic finesse placed the needed focus on this central character.

Offenbach's "Tales of Hoffman" is an opera which appeals to everybody in the theater for its charming, lyrical music and its fantastic, if somewhat incomprehensible story. A libretto will be needed to enjoy and comprehend this opera from the records; it can be acquired cheaply through almost any music shop. Though the notes on the envelopes are quite complete, they will not help those unfamiliar with the French language to grasp the significance of the action or appreciate the finer points of the text.

In making these LP discs available, Columbia has added to its operatic record repertoire a most delightful and diverting French opera-comique. There isn't a score quite like it in existence. —J.N.

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PUCCINI: *La Boheme*—Mi chiamano Mimi, and Suor Angelica—Senza mamma bimbo tu sei morto; **Licia Albanese** (soprano) with **RCA Victor Orchestra** conducted by **Victor Trucco**. Victor disc 49-0696, 95c.

▲ Listening to Albanese's "Mi chiamano Mimi" recalls the Toscanini performance in which she participated. How many of us have wished that performance would be placed on records. Mimi is one of the soprano's most convincing roles and she sings this aria with genuine feeling. The touching aria of Sister Angelica from perhaps Puccini's least effective opera calls for sobs and tears. Yet, here too the soprano is convincing, for the good Sister remembers her child dying without its mother's blessing. Puccini's music is well made; he could hardly have muffed an opportunity like this. Good recording!

STRAUSS: *Der Rosenkavalier*—Di rigor armati; **RIMSKY-KORSAKOFF:** *Sadko*—Hindulied; **Peter Anders** (tenor) with **German Opera House Orchestra**. Capitol-Telefunken 10" disc 7-80165, \$1.00.

▲ Even Anders with his fine tenor voice finds the tessitura of the Italian Singer's song from the first act of "Der Rosenkavalier" not too easy to maintain consistently good tonal quality. His high tones thin out a bit. His singing of the overly familiar "Song of India" is manly and forthright, but to my ears the German language does not fit the music. Strange couplings, considering that Anders has made a lot of fine records to choose from.

—J.N.

In The Popular Vein

Enzo Archetti

Itty-Bitty Polka and Pretty Girl Waltz: The Merrie Musette Orchestra, with vocals by The Continental Capers; Victor 25-1145 (or 51-0045). **You In My Arms - Waltz and Just One More Polka:** Johnny Vadnal and His Orchestra. Vocals by The Carroll Sisters; Victor 25-1144 (or 51-0044). **Dakota - Polka and The Dutch Laendler:** Six Fat Dutchmen, under the direction of H.

Loeffelmacher; Victor 25-1146 (or 51-0046). **Red Barn Polka and Marlene Waltz:** Ernie Benedict and His Polka-teers. Vocals by Lenny Sanders and the Kendall Sisters; Victor 25-1143 (or 51-0039).

● Good, dance-y records with plenty of bounce. The polkas make the best listening though the waltzes have a hearty swing. The **Laendler** is probably a traditional piece: it has an authentic sound. Of the orchestras, the Dutchmen are blunt and solid; Benedict and Vadnal have more subtlety. Benedict may be a shade better; but the Musette orchestra has the style for these things. The 45's are smooth but aurally, not better recorded.

Come Dance With Me and It's Delightful Down In Chile: Columbia 38658. **Melissa and You're Always There:** Columbia 38639. **Save A Little Sunbeam and Mama, What'll I Do:** Columbia 38676. Ray Noble and His Orchestra.

● Ray Noble's discs are always worth hearing regardless of their musical worth—being original in treatment and smooth in performance. The first is a distinct novelty—a waltz, with vocal chorus by Anita Gordon and a dialogue by Anita and Ray. Delightful! The reverse is from "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes," a comedy samba with a duet vocal chorus by Anita Gordon and Bob Graham. Bob also sings both vocals on the second disc. "Melissa" promises to be a hit, especially in the Noble treatment. The third disc is really Doris Day with Ray Noble and his orchestra accompanying because the spotlight is on her. But the orchestral backing is too good to play second fiddle to a voice, even one as charming as hers. In three records, the orchestra gets top votes—regardless of what the label says. The endcising is all equally good and clear.

Wedding Dolls and The Shoe Is On the Other Foot Now: Dinah Shore, George Morgan, and The Candy Kids, with String Band Accompaniment; Columbia 38663.

● Country music well done by a first rate combination. They sound as if born to the style. Excellent recording.

Home Town Band and Let's Put Out the Lights and Go To Sleep: Freddy Martin and His Orchestra, with vocals by Mary Griffin and The Martin Men; Victor 20-3614 (or 47-3120). **Home Town Band and Olly Olly Oxen Free:**

The Modernaires, with Orchestra; Columbia 38688.

● "Home Town Band" is a rousing descriptive number which is gaining rapid popularity. The Modernaires perform it in typical style, and Freddy Martin a trifle better in his own way. The Modernaires' reverse has the character of a folk song which it may be despite three authors' names on the label. It has a fetching lilt. Martin's flipover is good but it doesn't ease the memory of Ray Noble's version. **The Old Master Painter and St. James Infirmary:** Phil Harris and His Orchestra. Vocals by Phil Harris and Chorus; Victor 20-3608 (or 47-3114). **The Old Master Painter and Bless You:** Peggy Lee and Mel Tormé, with The Mello-men and Orchestra; Capitol 791.

● Phil Harris has practically made "Old Master Painter" his own. His patter style fits it well and glosses over much of the cheap sentiment. Peggy and Mel sing it with more finesse than it deserves. "Bless You" is more their style, though here, too, the goo gets a bit annoying. "St. James" is surprisingly good. It has little of its original jazz feeling left when Phil Harris gets through with it but it tells a story. This is a jazz classic but not the way Phil presents it. Recordings, in both instances, are excellent. Again, the 45 offers nothing better than the shellac other than the price.

The Crickets and More Moon: Capitol 57-682. **I'll Be Glad When You're Dead, You Rascal You and Rhapsody in Wood:** Capitol 57-772. **I Got It Bad and That's Right:** Capitol 15427. **Early Autumn and Keeper of the Flame:** Capitol 57-616. Woody Herman and His Orchestra.

● As was to be expected from a jazz group of the first water, this is a gem of a batch of discs. There is enough musical worth, variety, and virtuosity to suit anyone for a row of Sundays.

"The Crickets" is a Josef Marais original and obviously in the South African folk vein. Except for a brief jazzy middle section, it is done quite straight, with Woody Herman and Mary Ann McCall giving a creditable imitation of Marais and his wife. "More Moon" is fast and jumpy, a string of instrumental choruses that warm the heart for their neatness. Gene Ammons on tenor sax, Bill Harris

on trombone, Woody Herman on clarinet, Shelley Mannie on drums, and Terry Gibbs on vibes, really shine. "You Rascal You" won't replace Cab Calloway's but it's good in its own way. Both "Rhapsody in Wood" and "Early Autumn" are Ralph Burns' originals. The first is fast and features Woody on clarinet; and the second is slow and rhapsodic, featuring Woody on alto sax, Terry Gibbs on vibes, and Stan Getz on tenor sax. "Keeper" is a Shorty Rogers number, as was "More Moon", and it's in the same vein. Serge Chaloff's baritone sax and Bill Harris' trombone impress here. "That's Right", with which Shorty Rogers collaborated with Chubby Jackson, could be put in the same category. The line-up is different here. Ellington won't be too displeased with Woody's version of his "I Got It Bad." It could almost be called a downright good imitation, with Woody Herman on alto sax sounding like a carbon copy of Johnny Hodges. Mary Anne Mc-

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● Four jazz classics played by modern groups in the best old-time jazz style. The succession of solos on the Gowans disc are so good that it would not be fair to single out any instrumentalist. This disc will surely remain a classic along with others of earlier days of the same numbers. The Pee Wee Hunts are nearly as good, lacking only a little in fervor.

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(Continued from page 182)

svegliare mattina!; **Adelina Stehle** (soprano); **Maria Camporelli** (soprano); **Edoardo Garbin** (tenor) and **Mario Sammarco** (baritone), with piano (1905). IRCC 3069, \$2.25.

THE SCOTTI record is not to be confused with his performance of the same aria repressed from the Victor master some years ago (IRCC 75). That disc was piano accompanied and made two years earlier than this, which is re-recorded from an Edison cylinder. If memory serves, the Victor record was a more leisurely reading of the music — in any case this one seems a trifle rushed — but I doubt that the voice was as clear and forward as here. At its best Scotti's was not the most sensuously beautiful of baritones, and surely the recordings did not flatter him. This one shows more than most about the quality and the neatness of his vocalism. Campanari's bout with the Rossini *bravura* piece, also from an Edison cylinder, is a good sample so far as the vocal quality goes. In another way it is disappointing, however, for he gives us little more than a skeleton of the break-neck be-triplet melody.

The Bori is a second try, and a considerable improvement on IRCC 101: not a

little background noise has been eliminated, and the voice itself has been clarified. The original was made in New York in 1910, the year in which this youthful singer made a guest debut with the Metropolitan in Paris. She did not appear on the home stage until three years later. The lower and medium registers of her voice are very appealing and characteristic of the soprano as we knew her; some acidity in the high tones is undoubtedly exaggerated by the limitations of the recording.

Emma Carelli's voice is new to me. On this evidence I would be inclined to call it servicable but rather thin in quality, perhaps too open in the vowel sounds. She obviously had temperament, however, and there is plenty of drama in her *Suicidio*!

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Bonci must have been a finer singer than even the best of his records show. A tendency toward whiteness seems to be characteristic, and for all his reputation as a stylist, he is not above certain excesses. Gounod in Italian must in the nature of things lose its idiom, and the phrases never soar in the way they do in a good French performance. Here, in contrast to the Lehmann record, the orchestra is weak. But no one can complain, certainly, that the *Bohème* quartet is not here given an idiomatic performance. The voices are all very Italian, and there is just the right amount of emotionalizing to make the scene effective. The voices themselves, to be sure, have all been heard to better advantage on other discs, but this one is effective for all its piano accompaniment. —P.L.M.

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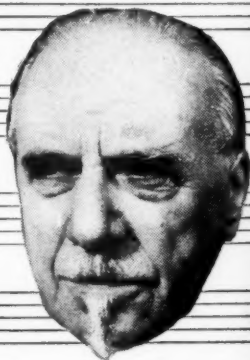
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